

Human Services Funding Committee / Community Development Committee (CDC)
Minutes
Thursday, January 31, 2008

Attending: *Members:* Claude Tellier, Mary Jane Laus, Paulette Brooks, Isaac BenEzra, and Jana McClure. *Town Staff:* Roy Rosenblatt

CDBG funding:

The Community Development committee met in the Town Hall, second floor small meeting room beginning at 7:40 p.m. The committee discussed the CDBG Public hearing and public comments. The committee discussed SRO (Single Room Occupancy) feasibility Study, as well as the possibility of a market analysis to determine actual need. Does the Amherst Comprehensive Community Plan address the issue of homelessness / affordable housing? How can we, as a committee, target homelessness into a long term plan integrated with affordable housing? The committee determined to actively meet with developers, identified through the planning department and discuss with them the possibility of a partnership in affordable housing in the business setting. I.e. affordable apartments above storefront properties. The committee consensus did not support a Single Room Occupancy solution that could possibility stigmatize residents in need and limit the homeless solution to exclude affordable housing within the larger community. The committee's recommendation for the coming fiscal year CDBG funds (\$85,000) to address homelessness through supportive services contract with Family Outreach of Amherst must not only address the needs of the present homeless population, but provide feedback including, but not limited to: population numbers served, affordable housing available, voucher availability, affordable housing or SRO units needed for the demand.

Motion unanimously approved: After the Public Hearing, public comment reviewed, in addition to communication from both Human Service agencies (Head Start and Amherst Survival Center) describing the importance of the building to their services, the committee unanimously supports the Community Development Block Grant funding activity to rehabilitate and preserve the North Amherst School building.

Amherst Human Service funding:

The committee discussed priorities if funding becomes available. Agencies funded last year were: Family Outreach of Amherst, Amherst Survival Center, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Center for New Americans, Men's Resource Center / Move Forward, Service Net /COT Center, and Not Bread Alone.

Motion unanimously approved The Community Development Committee recommends sustaining the human service agencies that were funded last year, and calls on the Select Board to place a warrant article on the Town Meeting Warrant to add approximately \$70,000. in the 2008 - 2009 budget for social services.

In view of the Finance Committee's priority to not include funding for Human Services in this year's budget, the committee discussed, and decided not to attend the Amherst's Finance Committee's meeting on February 7th when Human Services will be discussed.

The next meeting of the Community Development Committee will be on Wednesday, February 6, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in the Glass Room of the Bangs Center. Social Service Agency directors, if available, should be in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Paulette Brooks